

Becoming Environmentally Responsible

WHAT IS GREEN?



Feng Shui (pronounced fung schway) is the ancient Chinese art of placement that seeks to bring people and their environments into a positive relationship with one another.

According to the Chinese calendar, which is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements, Chinese New Year falls on the second new moon after the winter equinox and lasts with celebrations for 15 days. It is a time steeped in tradition symbolizing family unity, respecting ancestors with ceremonies given in honor of heaven and earth.

A good place for us to begin anew would be to become aware of conserving the earth's natural resources:

Today the world we live in has become so global and technologically advanced it makes our current life styles seem more frenetic than ever.

We seem to run all day without even having time to stop and think about the simple things. Our fast paced lives have suppressed our senses.

When was the last time you stopped to *feel* the warmth of the sun on your face, *listened* to the melodious trickle of a stream, *Watched* the wind skim across a pond, or *breathed* in the moist rich scent of a forest?

By being Aware of the principles of Feng Shui, the ancient art of placement that seeks to bring people and their environments into a positive relationship with one another, we can start the process of conscious living. By using the Bagua as a tool for locating your life aspirations and working with the Five Element Theory, we can unify all areas of our lives.

Through Interior Design by selecting products known as 'Green', using natural fibers and fabrics, selecting plants that remove toxins from the air, adding natural light or using low voltage or CFL and full spectrum lighting, and using finishes with low voc's, we can transform our living spaces so that they can begin to actually heal and nurture us.

"Green" building and home products are being developed and used as a way to improve our environment and conserve our natural resources. **What is "Green"?** Green Design protects people's health and well being while also protecting the environment. Sustainable Design protects the global environment and eco systems. **We can begin to become environmentally responsible first by becoming knowledgeable.**

One of the largest categories of pollutants to our indoor air is through home furnishings. The type of products you specify can dramatically impact the level of VOC (volatile organic compound) emissions.

Indoor air quality: (IAQ)

The air inside your home is 10 x more polluted than the air outdoors. Indoor pollutants come from carpet and glues, furniture, paints, particle board, cleaning fluids, mold and dust mites.

To improve your indoor air quality:

Choose paints and sealants with low VOC's, ex: Benjamin Moore eco-spec paint.

Use a ventilation system with a hepa filter that removes dust, dirt and pollutants. Make sure you have the system periodically cleaned by a licensed professional.

Use an exhaust fan over the stove to remove gases and fans in the bathroom to remove water vapors that can cause mold to grow.

Floor covering:

Synthetic carpets and their backings have formaldehyde and phenols in them. It's best not to use them. Wool, jute, sisal, hemp and cotton, all from natural resources are better choices.

When hardwood is called for, wood from sustainable forests with water -based polyurethane or cork and the new bamboo floorings are good choices. Even natural vinyl (Marmoleum) and porcelain tile when applicable. All are natural and easy to maintain, hypoallergenic and durable.

Fabrics:

Natural fibers are the best choices – hemp, organic cotton, bamboo, linen, silk and only colored with vegetable dyes.

Furniture:

Furniture made with particle board, plastic foam and stain-retardant sprays contain the strongest chemicals and outgas the most.

Better choices would be furniture made from reclaimed wood and sustainable forests, and other casual material like bamboo, wicker and rattan.

Recycled Products:

Recycling materials to produce new products can save natural resources. Recycled rubber mats and glass for bathroom tiles are easily obtainable.

*"Together by Consciously beginning
to become aware of conserving the Earth's natural resources, we can begin to heal Ourselves"*

Joan M. Stigliano IIDA is a Feng Shui Design Practitioner and Educator. Joan has an Interior Design practice in Locust valley, N.Y. and teaches Feng Shui and Eco-design at the New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury and at The Long Island Feng Shui Institute. She is available by appointment at 516-671-6564. Or via email, MIZSTIG@aol.com,

Visit: www.joanstiglian.com